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MEASURING THE PROGRESS OF EXTENSION WORK

A Study of 590 Farms and Farm Homes in McLean and Macon Counties, Ill., 1926

M. C. Wilson, W. H. Smith,
and Kathryn Van Aken

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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MEASURING THE PROGRESS OF EXTENSION WORK

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M. C. Wilson,[1] W. H. Smith,[2] and Kathryn Van Aken[3]

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Nearly everyone who is concerned with the conduct of organized extension work is interested in measuring its effectiveness in reaching rural people and influencing them to adopt the improved farm and home practices taught. The extension worker is vitally interested in conducting his work with the highest possible efficiency. The farmers and farm women are immediately concerned with the dissemination of information that will enable them to meet certain farm and home problems and develop a satisfactory community life.

The general public wants to know how the State agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture are succeeding with the task imposed upon them by the passage of the Smith-Lever law in 1914.

To measure the progress and effectiveness of extension teaching the study reported in this circular was undertaken by the Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Extension Service, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois in cooperation. Although the primary purpose of the study was to obtain data regarding the improved practices adopted by farmers and home makers as the result of extension teaching, and to evaluate the means and agencies which had influenced the acceptance of these practices, the study was also planned so as to give a large number of extension workers first-hand information regarding present farm and home conditions in typical areas, and to acquaint them with the survey method of studying extension problems.

PLAN AND SCOPE OF STUDY

Representatives of the extension service called at every farm within the areas selected and obtained directly from the farmer and farm woman information regarding their contact with extension. In so far as possible the farmer was interviewed by a man trained in agriculture, and the home maker by a woman trained in home economics, both workers being experienced in the conduct of extension. Prior to starting the field work ample time was taken at extension headquarters to train all members of the survey party in the use of the questionnaire (figs. 1 and 2), and to familiarize them with the various extension activities in the areas involved. The schedules were carefully checked at headquarters each day for errors and inconsistencies, and the

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location of each farm was noted on a map, in case it should be advisable to obtain additional information or to make another study of the same farms and homes later. Data were obtained from 590 farms and homes in representative sections of two counties. This number represents approximately 97 per cent of all the farms located in the areas involved. The data were collected during the latter part of June, 1926, when corn cultivation was in full swing. The fact that farmers were extremely busy, combined with the natural unwillingness of many persons to give credit for improvement to outside agencies, would indicate that the information obtained regarding the influence of extension teaching is somewhat less than what has actually taken place.

ORGANIZATION OF EXTENSION IN ILLINOIS

The agricultural extension service in Illinois is organized and administered under the terms of the Smith-Lever Act. The work is carried on in the various counties in cooperation with the local farm and home bureaus of which there are 95 of the former and 21 of the latter.

Each county having a farm bureau employs a farm adviser from a list of candidates approved by the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois. A cooperative agreement is entered into between the farm bureau and the agricultural extension service for the purpose of giving unity and direction to the program and policy. In developing agricultural extension work in the counties, the policy has been followed of insisting upon the formation of county farm bureaus with funds enough pledged through individual membership fees, in addition to those received through public sources, to finance the work properly. Thus farmers themselves have participated in an organized way in financing the work, in shaping the policies of the organization, and in building the programs of work. The annual membership fee of the farm bureau is usually $15.

The organization of the home bureau work and the employment of a home adviser follow the same general plan of the farm bureau. A separate county organization for women is formed with the women in the county assuming responsibility for the direction of the work and for financing the organization. The business routine in each county is handled by an executive board elected at a county meeting and this board is also responsible for hiring an adviser who has been approved by the college. Matters touching county policy and programs are decided by an advisory council which is composed of the chairman of each organized community in conference with at least one extension representative. The executive boards meet once a month and the advisory council from two to four times a year. The annual membership fee in the home bureau is usually $5.

Two Counties Studied

McLean and Macon Counties are located in east central Illinois in what is generally known as the grain section of the State. Corn and oats are the principal crops. A large percentage of the corn is shipped out of this section. However, beef cattle and hog feeding fill an important place in the plan of production on many farms. Dairying is being carried on by a large number of farmers in a small way. Livestock is apparently on the increase, due in part to the demand for dairy products, but even more to the necessity of retaining the crops grown upon the farms as a means of helping to maintain or improve the productivity of the land which is showing the effect of the continued production of grain for sale.

Extension work has been conducted in both counties for a substantial period of time. A farm adviser (county agricultural agent) was first employed in McLean County in 1915 and in Macon County in 1918. Home advisers (home demonstration agents) have been employed in both counties since 1918. In keeping with the plan followed throughout the State, McLean and Macon Counties have had strong farm and home bureaus cooperating with the agricultural college extension service in the direction of the local extension work prior to and since the employment of resident extension agents. Table 1 gives the names and periods of service of the extension agents employed in the two counties since the beginning of the work.

Table 1. - Extension agents employed with periods of service

Farm adviser	Assistant farm adviser	Home adviser
	McLean County	
D. O. Thompson Apr. 1, 1915-Mar. 1, 1919	H. F. Fahrnkopf Mar. 1, 1920-Sept. 8, 1921	Clara Brian Apr. 13, 1918-Sept. 1, 1926
O. D. Center Oct. 20, 1919-Sept. 8, 1921	R.L. Cuff Jan. 11, 1921-Jan. 10, 1922	
H. F. Fahrnkopf Sept. 9, 1921 - present	W. H. Coultas Mar. 15, 1926 - present	
	Macon County	
Sidney B. Smith Mar. 1, 1918-Apr. 16, 1922	J. F. Ziegler Feb. 1, 1920-Feb. 28, 1921	Lilla Harkins Nov. 6, 1918-Dec. 3, 1921
E. H. Walworth Apr. 17, 1922 - present		Rhea Gates Mar. 27, 1922-Apr. 1, 1923
		Neva Woods May 28, 1923-Oct. 1, 1926

FARM AND HOME SURVEY OF THE RESULTS OF EXTENSION WORK

No. ____Co.____ Date_____

Farm and home problems concerning which assistance is desired:-

Problem	Effort made to obtain it

Practices adopted due to extension:-

Farm and home practices adopted	Extent*	Methods largely responsible (see list below)	Ext. agt's involved F.A.	H.A.	C.L.	Spe.	L. L. involved

*Extent: Slight (S), Medium (M), Complete (C).

What other agencies such as Smith-Hughes teacher, farmers' inst., farm papers, etc., do you rely upon for assistance in connection with problems relating to: Farm_____ Home_____

List members of family who have carried on a junior project:-

Name	Present age	In school	Cal. yrs. in work	Project	Why discontinued
a.					
b.					

Abbreviations: Correspondence (cor); office call (o.c.); telephone call (tel.); farm or home visit (f.v.); leader-training meeting (l.tr.); bulletin (bul.); circular letter (cir. l.); news story (n.s.); extension school or short course (e.s); result demonstration: Adult (dem.a); juinor (dem. jr); method demonstration meeting (m.dem.); general meeting (mtg.); radio (r.); exhibit (exh.); poster (p.); indirect influence (ind.).

Fig. 1. - Observe side of questionnaire card used in collecting data.

Name_____Address_____Township_____
No. in family: Adults____Children____Hired help____No. children (10-20) ____
In school (10-20)____In college____Education: Husband____Wife____
Dist. to F.B. off.____To Town____Kind of road____Type of farming____
Acres: In farm____Imp'd. land____Years: Farming____This farm____Owner____Tenant____
Phone____Radio____Member: F.B., Present____Past____Why dis'd____
____Member: H.B., Present____Past____Why dis'd.____
____Member of other organ's. (G., FU.,CT.,SA.,FE.,C.,)____
____Extension activities on farm____
In Home____Other extension activities attended or participated in: Farm____Home____
Contact with FA.____HA.____CL.____Spec.____LL.____ Have cir. letters or bul's been rec'd?
____Farm papers taken?____
Home magazines taken?____Do you receive useful agr'l. and home econ. inf. over radio?____What stations?____
Do you use radio market report? ____What type of radio program is wanted?____
____How has your community benefited through extension
____Why do those who know of imp'd methods fail to put them into practice?____
How may more people be influenced to adopt imp'd. practices?____
____Other suggestions for the improvement of the service____
____Attitude____
Remarks:____

Extension Services of the Illinois Agricultural College and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

Fig. 2. - Reverse side of questionnaire card used in collecting data.

GENERAL INFORMATION RELATING TO FARMS STUDIED

The 590 farms included in the study averaged 175 acres in area and were located slightly more than 10 miles from the county extension headquarters (Table 2). On 56 per cent of the farms the operator was a tenant, the percentage of tenancy being slightly higher in the Macon County area than in the McLean County area. Telephones were found in 89 per cent of the farm homes and radios in 31 per cent of them. Not quite half of the farmsteads were located on improved roads.

Table 2. - General information relating to farms included in study

Item	Number	Percentage
Farm and home records obtained	590	--
Farms operated by owners	259	44
Farms operated by tenants	331	56
Farms with children 10 to 20 years	305	52
Children 10 to 20 years	650	--
Average size of farm (acres)	175	--
Homes with telephones	528	89
Homes with radios	184	31
Farms located on improved roads	252	43
Average distance to county extension office	10.2	--

Hired Help

An average of about nine months of outside help was employed by 51 per cent of the farm operators. Two per cent of the farm homes employed outside help for six months of the year (Table 3). All of the household help was boarded in the operator's home . On 63 per cent of the farms employing outside help all of the farm help boarded in the operator's home. On 35 per cent of these farms no hired help was boarded in the operator's home.

Table 3. - Hired help on farms and in homes

Item	Number of farms	Percentage of total farms	Total months hired help	Average months hired help
All farms or homes with hired help	304	51.5	2,662.5	8.7
Farms with hired help	302	51.2	2,585	8.6
Homes boarding hired help (farm)	195	33.1	- - -	- - -
Homes not boarding hired help (farm)	112	19.0	- - -	- - -
Homes with hired help	13	2.2	77.5	6.0
Homes boarding hired help (home)	13	2.2	- - -	- - -

Farm Papers and Home Magazines Taken

Agricultural papers were taken regularly by 88 per cent of the farmers interviewed (Table 4). Twenty-two per cent took but one farm paper, 32 per cent two papers, 19 per cent three papers, and 14 per cent four or more papers. Home magazines came regularly to 62 per cent of the farm homes. Twenty-eight per cent received but one home maganzine, 21 per cent two, and 13 per cent three or more home magazines.

Table 4. - Farm and home magazines taken

Papers or magazines taken	Farms taking farm papers		Homes taking home magazines	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Any paper or magazine	519	88.0	363	61.5
One	132	22.4	163	27.6
Two	189	32.0	124	21.0
Three	114	19.3	48	8.1
Four or more	83	14.1	27	4.6

Membership in Farmers' Cooperative Organizations

The farm bureau led the farmers' association in the number of members located in the areas studied, with 35 per cent of the farmers involved (Table 5). The other associations with a considerable percentage of the farmers represented were the livestock shipping association and the farmers, elevator association, with 19 and 11 per cent, respectively, of the farmers enrolled.

Table 5. - Membership in farmers' and home-makers' association

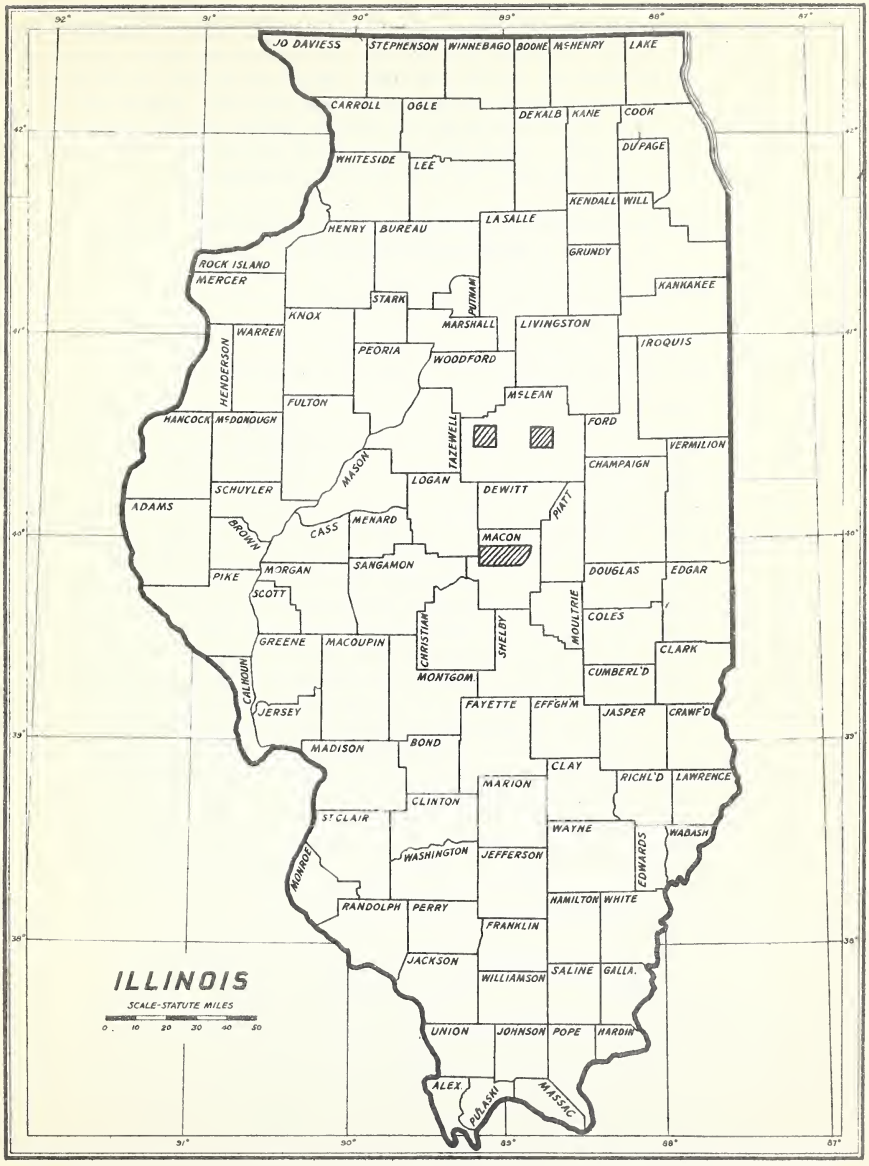
Association	Number of members	Percentage of all farmers
Farm bureau	208	35
Home bureau	131	22
Shipping association	113	19
Farmers' elevator	65	11
Community club	22	4
Cow-testing association	20	3
Other associations	37	6

PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION ACTIVITES AND CONTACT WITH EXTENSION WORKERS

On 35 per cent of the farms studied the farm operator was a member of the county farm bureau, the local organization of farmers cooperating with the State college in the conduct of agricultural extension (Table 6). An additional 25 per cent of the farm operators had previously belonged to the farm bureau. The home bureau, an organization for rural women similar to the farm bureau, counted in its membership 22 per cent of the farm women with an additional 17 per cent previously enrolled On 15 per cent of the farms the farm operator, the farm woman, or some other member of the operator's family, was either a local extension leader or had served as such at some previous time. Local leaders of home-economics extension were contributed by 11 per cent of the homes, whereas 7 per cent of the farms furnished leaders of agricultural extension.

Formal extension activities ,such as field meetings, adult and junior demonstrations, were conducted on 19 per cent of the farms, while an additional 37 per cent of the farm operators had attended such activities on neighboring farms and at community centers. Formal activities were reported as having been conducted in 26 per cent of the farm homes, with a total of 53 per cent of the farm women participating in one way or another in some home-economics extension activity. The farm operator, or the farm woman, or some other member of the farm family had attended an extension meeting or taken part in some other activity in 70 per cent of the farms and homes studied.

One farm or home out of every four studied reported one or more boys and girls engaged in 4-H club work at some time.



▨ Areas included in study

Personal contact with some extension worker through attendance at meetings, farm visits, office calls, and the like, by some member of the farm family was reported by 78 per cent of the farms. The farm adviser had made contact with 65 per cent of the farmers. The home adviser had been in personal touch with 57 per cent of the farm women. Direct contact between farming people and the specialists located at the college was reported for 18 per cent of the farms. The voluntary local extension leaders had made contacts with one farm and home out of every eight studied.

Table 6. - Participation in extension activities and contact with extension workers

Item	Number	Percentage
Farm and home records obtained	590	100
Members of farm bureau (present)	208	35
Members of farm bureau (former)	149	25
Members of home bureau (present)	131	22
Members of home bureau (former)	99	17
Farms and homes contributing local leaders	88	15
Farms contributing local leaders (agricultural)	40	7
Homes contributing local leaders (home economics)	67	11
Farms on which extension activities were conducted	114	19
Other farms represented in extension activities	221	37
Homes in which extension activities were conducted	155	26
Other homes represented in extension activities	161	27
Farms with boys and girls in club work	146	25
Farms or homes represented in any extension activity	417	70
Farmers or home makers reporting contact with:		
Any extension worker	459	78
Farm adviser	385	65
Home adviser	334	57
Subject-matter specialist	108	18
Local extension leaders	68	12

Farmers and Farm Women Adopt Extension Practices

Each farmer and farm woman interviewed was asked to name changes made on the farms or in the homes that were in any way due to activities of the extension service. Definite changes in farm operations were reported for 86 per cent of the farms and in home operations for 65 per cent of the farm homes studied (Table 7). The average number of farm practices adopted was 3.6 and home practices 2.7. Considering agricultural and home-economics practices together 92 per cent of the farms had been influenced by the extension service to adopt 5.3 practices.

Table 7. - Farms and homes adopting practices

Item	Number	Percentage
Farm records obtained	590	--
Farms on which some practice had been changed	545	92
Average number of practices changed per farm	5.3	--
Farms on which agricultural practices had been changed	506	86
Agricultural practices changed per farm	3.6	--
Homes in which home-economics practices had been changed	382	65
Home-economics practices changed per home	2.7	--

Although the above figures seem high it must be remembered that this information was furnished by the farmers and farm women themselves and is unquestionably an understatement of the influence of extension rather than an overstatement owing to a natural unwillingness to give credit to outside agencies and to failure to remember during the brief interview all the changes made.

Methods Which Influenced Farmers and Home Makers to Adopt Practices and Extension Agents Involved

As complete information as possible was obtained regarding the means and agencies employed in extension which the farmer and farm woman thought had in any way been responsible for the adoption of the improved practices. Information regarding the extension agents involved in each case was also obtained. In many cases the adoption of a particular practice was due to the cumulative effect of several methods. In other instances the influence of a single method was outstanding. In still other cases the adoption of the practice traced indirectly to the activities of the extension service, the methods involved being difficult of identification.

Methods of a publicity nature, such as general meetings. bulletins, news stories, and circular letters were reported as having influenced 78 per cent of the farmers and home makers adopting practices (Table 8).

Personal-service type of methods like farm and home visits, office calls and correspondence influenced 33 per cent of the farmers and home makers reached ,while object-lesson methods, including method demonstrations and adult and junior result demonstrations, were reported by 53 per cent. Influences which could not be credited to definite methods were mentioned by 74 per cent of the farms and homes reporting practices adopted (Throughout this discussion of methods and agencies the reader should keep in mind that the adoption of a single practice may have been influenced by several extension methods and by more than one kind of extension agent).

Of the 92 per cent of all farms on which some practice was adopted 79 per cent reported the influence of the farm adviser, 62 per cent the home adviser, and 28 per cent the subject-matter specialists. Assistance from local extension leaders was reported for 13 per cent of the farms and homes.

Table 8. - Methods which influenced farms to adopt practices and extension agent involved

Item	Number	Percentage
Farms on which some practice had been adopted	545	92
Farms or homes influenced by:		
Publicity methods	427	78
Personal-service methods	180	33
Object-lesson methods	288	53
Indirect influences	404	74
Farms or homes influenced by:		
Farm adviser	431	79
Home adviser	338	62
Club agent	12	2
Specialist	151	28
Farms or homes assisted by local leaders	73	13

Practices Adopted and Influences Responsible

Of the 2,870 practices adopted by farmers and home makers on the 545 farms for which the adoption of practices was reported, 1,824 related to agriculture, and 1,046 to home economics (Table 9).

Methods falling in the publicity group were reported in connection with 41 per cent of all practices adopted, personal-service methods 14 per cent ,and object lesson 29 per cent. Indirect influences were mentioned in connection with 28 per cent of the practices. Partial credit at least for the adoption of 47 per cent of the practices was given to the farm adviser, 32 per cent to the home adviser, and 11 per cent to the subject-matter specialists. The assistance of local extension leaders was reported in 4 per cent of the practices.

Table 9. - Method which influenced adoption of practices and extension agent involved

Item	Number	Percentage
Practices adopted	2,870	100
Agricultural practices adopted	1,824	64
Home-economics practices adopted	1,046	36
Practices influenced by:		
Publicity methods	1,181	41
Personal-service methods	406	14
Object-lesson methods	832	29
Indirect influences	809	28
Practices influenced by:		
Farm adviser	1,342	47
Home adviser	926	32
Club agent	18	6
Specialist	321	11
Local leader	108	4

Though not a true quantitative measure of the influence of the individual methods employed in extension teaching, the relative frequency with which each was reported as an influence in bringing about the adoption of practices, does furnish a satisfactory basis for studying the comparative effectiveness of the different methods. Table 10 gives the percentage of the practices adopted in connection with which the influences of the individual methods were reported.

Table 10. - Relative frequency with which extension methods were reported

Method	Percentage of practices adopted		
	Total	Agriculture	Home economics
Indirect	28.2	35.2	16.0
News stories	25.7	29.7	18.6
Method demonstrations	24.7	12.6	45.8
Meetings	11.4	8.9	15.9
Office calls	8.4	12.8	.6
Bulletins	5.8	6.3	5.0
Farm and home visits	5.5	8.3	.6
Adult result demonstrations	3.7	4.6	2.1
Junior result demonstrations	1.1	.4	2.3
Extension schools	.6	.9	---
Circular letters	.5	.5	.3
Radio	.3	.4	.2
Correspondence	.3	.4	.1
Exhibits	.1	.1	.2
Telephone	.1	.1	---
Posters	.03	---	.1

Considering agricultural practices only, indirect influences were reported most frequently followed closely by the extension news story each of which influenced approximately one-third of the practices adopted. Office calls and method demonstration meetings are next in order with about one-eighth of the practices involved in each case followed by general meetings, farm visits, bulletins, and adult result demonstrations.

Method demonstration meetings were the outstanding influences in bringing about the adoption of home-economics practices, having been mentioned in nearly 50 per cent of the cases. News stories, indirect and general meetings are next in order followed by bulletins, junior and adult result demonstrations. With many practices the influence of more than one teaching method was reported.

A list of the improved practices adopted on the farms studied is given in Table 11.

Table 11. - Improved practices adopted

Practice	Number of farms or homes	Percentage of total
Agriculture:		
Soils	225	12.3
Cereals	363	19.9
Legumes	391	21.4
Dairy	211	11.6
Beef cattle	27	1.5
Swine	194	10.6
Poultry	174	9.5
Marketing	23	1.3
Insect control	129	7.1
Miscellaneous	87	4.8
Total	1,824	100.0
Home economics:		
Foods	585	55.9
Clothing	145	13.9
Home management	49	4.7
Home furnishing	79	7.5
Health	98	9.4
Miscellaneous	90	8.6
Total	1,046	100.0

INFLUENCE OF OTHER FACTORS UPON THE ADOPTION OF PRACTICES

Many other factors besides the means and agencies employed in extension teaching help to determine the extent of the adoption of improved practices. Some of these factors like land tenure, size of farm, telephones, nature of roads, and the like are largely outside the control of extension workers. Other factors like participation in extension activities and contact with extension agents are to a considerable extent under the control of extension workers.

Land Tenure

The farm operator was the owner on 44 per cent of the farms studied, the operator being a tenant on the remaining 56 per cent of the farms (Table 12). Practically the same proportion of owners and tenants had adopted agricultural practices. Six per cent more owners than tenants reported the adoption of home-economics practices. Considering the number of practices adopted, as well as the percentage of farms involved, the owner group reported nearly 25 per cent more practices adopted per 100 farms than was the case with the tenant group.

Table 12. - Land tenure in relation to farms adopting practices

	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Average size (acres)	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Number of practices adopted per 100 farms
				Agriculture	Home economics	Any practice	
Owners	259	44	160	85	68	93	548
Renters	331	56	169	86	62	92	438

Size of Farm

Grouping the farms according to size as measured by total acreage (Table 13), it will be noted that the percentages of farms adopting agricultural practices and the percentages of homes adopting home-economics practices increase consistently with increased size of farms though the difference between the size groups is not great. The number of practices adopted per 100 farms, 608 in the large size group, is nearly twice as great as the number of practices, 332, adopted per 100 farms in the small size group.

Table 13. - Relationship of size of farms to number of farms adopting practices

Group	Number of farms	Average size acres	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Number of practices adopted per 100 farms
			Agriculture	Home economics	Any practice	
0 to 80 acres	111	57	76	55	86	332
81 to 160 acres	248	136	87	68	93	442
Over 160 acres	231	248	90	66	95	608

Distance from extension office

Owing to the small range in distance from the county extension office represented by the farms included in the study there is little opportunity to study the influences of distance upon the adoption of extension practices. From similar studies conducted in other States* it is apparent that fully as many of those living at a distance from the extension office are influenced to adopt better practices as of those living near the office.

*Wilson, M. C. "The Effectiveness of Extension Work in Reaching Rural People." U. S. Dept. Agr. Bul. 1384.

Nature of Roads

Where the farmstead was situated on an improved road (concrete or macadam) a somewhat higher percentage of both the farms and homes had adopted improved practices (Table 14) than the farms located on unimproved highways. The number of improved practices adopted per 100 farms was 584 for farms located on good roads as compared to 414 for farms on poor roads.

Table 14. - Nature of roads as related to farms adopting practices

Nature of road	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Number of practices adopted per 100 farms
			Agriculture	Home economics	Any practice	
Improved	252	43	91	70	96	584
Unimproved	338	57	82	61	90	414

Telephone

Nearly all the farm homes were equipped with telephones. Table 15 shows that the telephone was not given as an important influence upon the adoption of practices. It will be noted that the 11 per cent of homes without telephones reported the adoption of only about two-thirds as many agricultural and home-economics practices as farms with telephones. The telephone is undoubtedly an important means through which people are informed regarding extension activities which lead to the adoption of better practices.

Table 15. - Relationship of telephone in the home to adoption of improved practices

Group	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Number of practices adopted per 100 farms
			Agriculture	Home economics	Any practice	
Telephone	528	89	87	67	93	503
No telephone	62	11	74	48	84	343

Membership in the extension associations

Since the farm and home bureau associations in Illinois are the organizations of farmers and home makers cooperating with the college in the conduct of organized

extension work, it is of interest to note the influence of membership in these associations upon the adoption of practices. Ninety-nine per cent of the farmers who were members of the farm bureau at the time the data were collected reported the adoption of practices (Table 16) as compared to 83 per cent of the former members and 76 per cent of the nonmembers. The number of agricultural practices adopted per 100 farms varied from 477 for members to 242 for former members and 202 for nonmembers. Although membership in the farm bureau is apparently closely related to the adoption of improved practices, it is equally apparent that extension has reached a large percentage of those farmers not actively supporting the work locally.

Table 16. - Relation of membership in farm bureau to adoption of agricultural practices

Group	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting agricultural practices	Number of agricultural practices adopted per 100 farms
Members of farm bureau	208	35	99	477
Former members of farm bureau	149	25	83	242
Nonmembers	233	40	76	202

Membership in the home bureau was even more closely related to the adoption of home practices (Table 17). Ninety-two per cent of the present home-bureau members adopted practices as compared to 78 per cent of the former members and 51 per cent of the nonmembers. The members of the home bureau were also reached much more intensively than the nonmembers, the number of improved home-economics practices adopted per 100 homes being 354 for present members, 249 for former members, and 93 for nonmembers. There is less difference between present members and former members in the home bureau than in the farm bureau. The difference between members and nonmembers on the other hand is much greater in the home bureau than in the farm bureau.

Table 17. - Relation of membership in home bureau to adoption of home-economics practices

Group	Number of homes	Percentage of all homes	Percentage of homes adopting practices	Number of home-economics practices adopted per 100 homes
Members of home bureau	131	22	92	354
Former members of home bureau	99	17	78	249
Nonmembers	360	61	51	93

Participation in Extension Activities

Whether the farmer or farm woman participates in extension activities by attendance at meetings, having a boy or girl in club work, conducting a result demonstration on the farm, holding a method demonstration meeting in the home, and the like, seems to have a direct relationship to the spread of improved practices as brought out in Tables 18 and 19. Where an extension activity had been held on the farm 93 per cent of the farmers reported the adoption of better practices. (Table 18.) This was true of an equal percentage of the farmers participating in activities on neighboring farms or at community centers. Only 76 per cent of the farmers not attending meetings or otherwise participating reported adoption of practices. The number of practices reported adopted per 100 farms was more than twice as great where extension activities had been participated in.

Table 18. - Participation in agricultural extension activities as bearing on adoption of agricultural practices

Group	Number of farms	Percentage of farms	Percentage of farms adopting agricultural practices	Number of agricultural practices adopted per 100 farms
Farms having extension activities on farm	114	19	93	439
Other farms participating in extension activities	221	38	93	378
Farms not participating in extension activities	255	43	76	191

Participation in extension activities is even more important to the farm women (Table 19). Where the farm woman had carried on some extension activity in her own home, 88 per cent reported adoption of home practices. Eighty per cent of those attending meetings, or witnessing other activities in neighboring homes or near-by centers adopted practices. Where the farm woman had taken no part in extension activity, but 43 per cent adopted practices. The number of practices adopted per 100 homes was three to four times as great in the participating groups as in the nonparticipating group.

Table 19. - Participation in home-economics extension activities as bearing on adoption of home-economics practices

Group	Number of homes	Percentage of all homes	Percentage of homes adopting home-economics practices	Number of home-economics practices adopted per 100 homes
Homes having extension activities in home	155	26	88	339
Other homes participating in extension activities	161	27	80	204
Homes not participating in extension activities	274	47	43	70

Contact with Representatives of Extension Service

In addition to contacts with agents and specialists through attendance at meetings and the like, many other farmers and home makers were touched personally as a result of formal home visits, office calls, telephone conversations, and correspondence. In Table 20 the farmers are divided into two groups, those enjoying contacts, and those having made no contact with a member of the extension service. Ninety-three per cent of the former and 72 per cent of the latter adopted practices. The number of practices adopted per 100 farms was 380 for those making contacts as compared to 167 for those making no contacts.

Table 20. - Contact with agricultural extension workers as related to adoption of farm practices

Item	Number of farms	Percentage of total	Percentage of farms adopting agricultural practices	Number of agricultural practices adopted per 100 farms
Contact with any agricultural extension agent	393	67	93	380
No contact	197	33	72	167

With the farm women (Table 21) the contrast is even more striking, the percentage of farm women adopting home-economics practices being only half as great for the no-contact group as for the contact group, 41 per cent as compared to 83 per cent. The number of practices adopted per 100 homes was more than four times as great for the contact group as for the no-contact group, 265 as compared to 61.

Table 21. - Contact with home-economics extension workers as related to adoption of home practices

Item	Number of homes	Percentage of total	Percentage of homes adopting home-economics practices	Number of home-economics practices adopted per 100 homes
Contact with any home-economics extension worker	336	57	83	265
No contact	254	43	41	61

There is less spread of better practices in the nonparticipating and no-contact groups in home-economics practices than in agricultural practices. This may be due to difference in subject matter involved, the stage of development of home-economics subject matter as compared to agriculture, difference between men and women in readiness to accept new ideas, or to other reasons.

EXTENT AND INFLUENCE OF 4-H CLUB WORK

Boys and girls of club age (10 to 20 years) were found on slightly more than half of the farms studied (Table 22). Two-hundred thirty-seven boys and girls from 146 farms were either carrying on a junior project at the time the data were collected or had previously carried on such a project. This number equals 36 per cent of the boys and girls of club age and directly led 25 per cent of all the farms and homes to participate in extension activities. Seventeen per cent of the boys and girls of club age were in club work at the time the data were collected. They averaged 14.2 years of age and 8 per cent of them were not in school. The influence of junior result demonstrations was reported for 1.1 per cent of all practices adopted.

Table 22. - Farms and children in junior project work

Farm and home records obtained	590
Percentage of families with children of club age (10 to 20 years)	52
Number of children of club age	650
Number of families with boys and girls in 4-H clubs (ever)	146
Percentage of families with children in club work (ever)	25
Number of boys and girls in 4-H clubs (ever)	237
Percentage of boys and girls (10 to 20 years) in club work (ever)	36
Percentage of boys and girls (10 to 20 years) in club work (1926)	17
Average age of club members (1926)	14.2
Percentage of 1926 club members not in school	8
Percentage of all practices adopted due to influence of junior result demonstrations	1.1

The leading project carried on by club members was clothing with 99 members enrolled followed by pig 68, poultry 37, corn 28, calf 17, and canning 12.

REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING FARM AND HOME BUREAU MEMBERSHIP

An effort was made to learn why the 149 former members of the farm bureau and the 99 former members of the home bureau had dropped out. Although the real reason for discontinuing membership may not have been given in all cases, the reasons listed in Tables 23 and 24 throw some light on the problem. The principal reasons given for discontinuing membership in the farm bureau were no direct benefits to the individual from membership, membership dues too high, and dissatisfaction with the management of the farm bureau association. With the home bureau inability to attend meetings because of small children, no one to drive automobile, and other causes were the chief reasons given for discontinuance of membership. Other important reasons were the disbanding of the local home bureau group, cost of membership dues, dissatisfaction with management of the home bureau association, and greater interest in other activities.

Table 23. - Reasons given for discontinuing membership in the farm bureau

Reason	Number of farmers	Percentage former members
No direct benefits	50	33
Cost of membership too expensive	34	23
Dissatified with management of farm bureau	26	17
No longer interested	10	7
Other reasons	22	15
No reason given	7	5

Table 24. - Reasons given for discontinuing membership in home bureau

Reason	Number of farm women	Percentage of former members
Unable to attend meetings	28	28
Local home bureau unit disbanded	17	17
Cost of membership too expensive	11	11
Dissatisfied with management of home bureau association	9	9
Too busy with other interests	9	9
No longer interested in home bureau work	7	7
Other reasons	17	17
No reason given	1	1

COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM EXTENSION

Although many others thought that extension work had been a distinct benefit to the community in which they lived ,315 of the 590 farmers and home makers interviewed stated the specific nature of these benefits as they saw them. The replies covered a range of subjects which can be readily grouped under a few headings. The distribution of up-to-date agricultural subject matter was mentioned by 248 of the 315 furnishing this information, with 83 mentioning up-to-date home-economics subject-matter information. The development of social activities was reported as a distinct community benefit by 131 farmers and farm women with 67 mentioning the stimulus given farmers' organizations and the development of better marketing facilities, and 25 citing the work with young people through 4-H clubs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EXTENSION SERVICE

The farmers and home makers interviewed were invited to make suggestions for improving the extension service and particularly in reference to influencing more people to adopt improved practices. Of the 134 offering suggestions for extending better practices to others, 73 memtioned more field and home demonstrations, 29 suggested more meetings, and 20 felt that stimulating farmers' organizations would be helpful. The general suggestions offered for the improvement of the extension service by the 86 replying are similar in character to those mentioned above. Twenty-nine suggested more meetings, 22 work in improving farmers' organizations, and 21 more demonstrations. Explanation of why their neighbors did not follow more closely the teachings of the extension service were offered by 283 farmers. Two hundred fifteen of the replies may be classed under the heading "indifference," 92 lack of finances, whereas 43 felt that tenant farming was the chief reason.

AGENCIES OTHER THAN EXTENSION RELIED UPON FOR SUBJECT-MATTER ASSISTANCE

The farmers and farm women interviewed were asked to name the agencies other than the extension service relied upon for assistance with farm and home problems. In connection with 266 farmers replying to this part of the questionnaire 90 per cent listed farm papers as a source of helpful agricultural information. This is equivalent to 40 per cent of all the farmers included in the study. The farmers' institute was another important source of assistance. Twelve per cent of all the farm women and 42 per cent of the 153 women listing any other agency mentioned assistance received through home magazines. A substantial number rentioned the woman's section of the farm papers and farmers' institute as agencies drawn upon for assistance with home problems.

ATTITUDE TOWARD EXTENSION

Following the interview with each farmer and farm woman an estimate was made of their attitude toward extension work. Although there were instances where the attitude of the farm woman was different from that of the farmer, the percentages falling in the three classifications used are so similar that only the information for farm operators is given in Table 25.

Approximately 2 farmers out of every 3 were reported as favorable, 1 out of 4 indifferent, and 1 out of 14 opposed. Of the farm women only 1 out of 25 was opposed with corresponding changes in the other groups.

Table 25. - Attitude toward extension work

Attitude	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms
Farm records obtained	590	100
Farms reported favorable	397	67
Farms reported indifferent	143	24
Farms reported opposed	39	7
Farms reported no attitude	11	2

SUMMARY

The study is based on information obtained through personal interviews with farmers and farm women on 590 contiguous farms in representative areas of two Illinois counties.

That the Office of Cooperative Extension Work has been effective in reaching farmers and farm women is indicated by the fact that improved practices taught by the extension service were reported in use on 86 per cent of the farms and in 65 per cent of the homes studied.

In the group of agricultural practices the means most frequently reported as having influenced the adoption of improved practices were the indirect spread from one neighbor to another, the news story, the office call, the method demonstration meeting, and the general meeting. The farm visit, the bulletin, and the adult result demonstration were other important influences.

In the home-economics practice group the method demonstration meeting was the outstanding influence followed by the news story, indirect spread, and the general meeting.

About 25 per cent more improved practices were reported adopted by owner operators than by tenant operators. The number of improved practices increased with increased size of farm . This was true of home-economics practices as well as farm practices.

Fully as high a percentage of the farms and homes more than 10 miles away from the county extension office adopted practices as was true of the farms and homes less than 10 miles away.

Farms located on improved roads had a 40 per cent greater adoption of practices than farms located on unimproved roads.

Where telephones were found in the farm homes the number of improved practices reported adopted was nearly 50 per cent greater than where there were no telephones.

Status of membership in the county extension associations (farm bureau and home bureau) has a direct relationship to the adoption of improved practices. The spread of better farm practices to nonmembers was much greater than the spread of better home practices.

Participation in extension activities and contact with extension workers were important factors in the adoption of improved practices, being of even greater importance in spread of home than of farm practices.

The number of boys and girls ever in 4-H club work was equal to 36 per cent of the boys and girls of club age at the time the data were collected.

Lack of appreciation of direct benefits, cost of membership dues, and dissatisfaction with the management, were the principal reasons given for discontinuing membership in the farm bureau. Inability to get to meetings, disbanding of local home bureau unit, and cost of membership, were the reasons most commonly given for dropping out of the home bureau.

With 2 out of every 3 farmers found favorable to extension work, and but 1 out of 15 opposed, it is evident that the farmers and home makers in the two counties studied look upon the extension service as a worth-while public agency rendering helpful service.

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